

**Division of Children and Family Services**  
**Update on Child Welfare Successes and Progress**  
**December 1, 2015**

**Statistical section (note attached trending worksheets):**

Since Restore Hope Summit held in August 2015, there has been an increase of 200 children into the foster care system. Currently we have 4600 children in care

When the summit was held we had approximately 1,200 individuals that need initial contact and as of November 16, there is no backlog. All have been contacted.

Since the Restore Hope Summit held in August 2015, we have:

Increased foster homes by 109

Increased beds by 232

Since we started tracking August 1, 2015 we have sent 394 In Home Consults to the field

First stage in the foster home licensing process

At the end of October, 136 homes were on the wait list to begin training. Many of these homes have already been invited to a PRIDE training anywhere from one to three times. I know one PRIDE class started on Nov. 5, so some of the people on the October wait list would have started in that training.

**Process Improvements:**

Developed and implemented an Applicant Tracking log that will allow the agency to track where applicants are in the foster home process

Developed the Foster/Adoptive/Foster& Adoptive Inquiry Queues which will allow us to know how many inquiries are coming in on a daily basis, weekly basis, monthly basis, how recruited, their preference and the detailed information for each person inquiring

Currently have 210 individuals in foster home training

31 Adoptive only

31 Foster and/or adoptive

50 Foster parents

6 Interstate Compact of Placement of Children (children placed across state lines)

92 Provisional (Relatives and Fictive Kin)

Met with Mid-South Academy to formalize streamlining the training process to better support perspective and approved foster families throughout the process – new process to begin Jan 1 in the Northwest part of the state

Reviewed and selected the SAFE home study instrument that is better designed to assess relative and fictive kin caregivers - new home study to be utilized beginning Jan 1 in the Northwest part of the state

Increased awareness in the needs of the system and for volunteers

As a result – have designated a central volunteer coordinator to handle applications, etc.

Identified and are advertising position that will serve as the Foster Care Liaison/Post Adoptive Liaison and Foster Care Manager

### **Collaborations:**

Increased and/or expanded partnerships

Agape House – opened family style group homes for children

Ft. Smith Children's Shelter – have bought an apartment complex which will be used to house youth who are transitioning to adulthood

Maggie's House – opened emergency shelter – located near Sebastian County

C4K has expanded coverage beyond Craighead County

Arkansas Baptist

Has recruited volunteers and will start training foster parents

### **Service Development:**

Have worked with two providers in developing a program to assist placement of those older more difficult youth – one program to start in November and the other in January. This will allow those youth to be placed in an appropriate setting that can better meet their needs, provide placement stability and be more cost efficient.

Contacts have been made to 104 of the 129 individuals who completed a Letter of Commitment at the Restore Hope Summit. 25 have been unable to be reached.

Faith based steering committee has met numerous times

Shared contact directory has been established

Contacts have been made to individuals

Packets of information have been sent to select church leaders

Oversight committee panel workgroups have been established and meetings are occurring to address the recommendations per the Paul Vincent report

### **Stakeholder Communication:**

Met with Judge Patty James on October 20 to discuss issues, provide education on waiver interventions and what is needed to improve relationship between DCFS and court.

Met with the officials from Compact (facility in Hot Springs) on October 20 to discuss where they are wanting to take their program and what our needs are.

Met with Adrien Waters on October 22 to discuss his desire to start up transitional homes in Wrightsville.

Met with a number of foster youth on October 22 to discuss what they want to see from providers, how they view the foster care system, what their needs are, etc. Very good discussion with them.

Met with all of the supervisors from across the state on October 22 and 23. Discussed the increase in awareness for the system and the positive impact of that, recognized their caseloads were high and that we were working to address that, shared with them my thoughts about what the division needs, and to stand together during these tough times. My presentation with them was to build them up, address their moral and let them know how they are appreciated.

Met with all of the contract placement providers on October 26 and discussed expectations for normalcy for the youth placed in their facilities, consistency in rules, agency expectations for youth placed in their facility, reviewed federal reasonable and prudent parenting standards, discussed the youth's comments from Youth Speak session of the Youth Leadership Conference and discussed concerns/issues.

On November 4 the University Partnership meeting was held at Harding University and we discussed ways in which they could help support new and existing workers and what they would like to see in the future for advancement opportunities for staff.

On November 10 the Director attended a roundtable discussion meeting at the Ft. Smith Children's Shelter to discuss the shelter expanding to providing a Transitional Youth program which would provide housing, etc. for youth aged 18 – 23 and how the community must partner with the child welfare agency to do this as this group is more appropriately served by the community being they are considered an adult at 18.

Have developed the visual displays for Counseling Services, Intensive Family Services, Home Study Services, Psychological Evaluation Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Services, and Prevention Support Services which will help us identify gaps in services, location of services to clients served, etc.

### **Events – Current and Upcoming:**

October 21 – Held Early Holiday Bazaar Sale – raised \$2,021.00 which will be used to purchase Christmas presents for our children and youth in care

October 30 – Held our Boo Bake – raised \$556.62 which will be used to purchase Christmas presents for our children and youth in care

Week of December 4 there will be a number of fund raising events with Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> being our Annual Holiday Bazaar – silent auction, items for sale and hot dogs and chili. The proceeds for this will be used to purchase Christmas presents for our children and youth in care

November 19<sup>th</sup> – Pulaski County Adoption event

November is National Adoption Month and we are anticipating finalizing 47 adoptions during the month

Preparing information for the Child Death and Near Fatality Multidisciplinary Review Committee established by Act 1245